



Published on *Washington Examiner* (<http://washingtonexaminer.com>)

[Home](#) > New York - and America - can profit from 'fracking' Marcellus Shale

By *The Examiner*

Created Apr 14 2011 - 8:05pm

New York - and America - can profit from 'fracking' Marcellus Shale

Comments (0)

It's no secret that we live in challenging times. Many sectors of our economy continue to struggle and our dependence on foreign energy sources continues to grow. However, there is some good news. Responsible development of the Marcellus Shale natural gas field has tremendous potential to help meet both of these challenges, and many, many more.

In 2009, the production of Marcellus Shale in Pennsylvania had an economic output of more than \$3.8 billion, and generated more than \$400 million in state and local tax revenues, while creating 48,000 new jobs. There is no reason to believe that we wouldn't see a similar positive effect in New York.

We need this economic development. The 2010 census numbers released recently were, unfortunately, no surprise. Western New York and the southern tier of New York experienced concentrated levels of population decline.

I don't believe this is because people don't want to live here, but because they cannot find substantial employment to support their families. It's quite simple: People go where the jobs are.

Penn State recently determined that counties in Pennsylvania where Marcellus development has taken place saw, on average, an 11 percent growth in sales tax revenue. Our local governments could derive much needed revenue from Marcellus Shale production.

Some fear hydraulic fracturing. The Finger Lakes region is my home. We all agree that we need to keep our natural resources safe and free from pollutants. The reality is that hydraulic fracturing has been used for more than 60 years on more than one million wells nationwide.

New York has a long association with gas production. For decades, producers developed natural gas resources from rock strata residing thousands of feet below the Marcellus, tapping formations such as the Trenton Black River and the Medina.

Nevertheless, concerns regarding groundwater contamination exist. Geologists tell us that our groundwater aquifer is thousands of feet above the shale containing natural gas and is separated by thousands of feet of impermeable rock.

This virtually eliminates any potential risk of groundwater contamination from the process of

hydraulic fracturing. Further, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is no shrinking violet.

The DEC has a long, effective record of monitoring the energy industry. It will ensure that exploration and extraction is done safely.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection just completed a study that found no radiation problem with drinking water in any of the seven rivers tested. Any risk from industry wastewater is further mitigated by the fact that more fracturing fluid is being recycled and never goes to water treatment plants. Pennsylvania natural gas producers are recycling as much as 90 percent of their wastewater, an amount predicted to increase.

The same holds true in New York. Tens of thousands of natural gas wells have been produced in our state and the regulators charged with managing and overseeing their activities have proven that development can be done safely while protecting our environment.

In fact, the DEC recently noted there was "no record of any documented instance of groundwater contamination caused by hydraulic fracturing for gas well development in New York, despite the use of this technology in thousands of wells across the state during the past 50 or more years."

Other studies, including a 2004 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency study, have concluded that hydraulic fracturing poses no significant environmental risk to drinking water supplies. There is no reason to expect anything different in developing the Marcellus Shale in New York.

The time has come to take appropriate precautions and move forward. Development of domestic energy resources today will lower our dependence on foreign energy tomorrow. We need to realize the potential that Marcellus Shale holds for improving our struggling economy and reducing our reliance on foreign energy.

Rep. Thomas Reed is a Republican who represents New York's 29th Congressional District.

[Op Eds](#) [NEP](#)

Source URL: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/op-eds/2011/04/new-york-and-america-can-profit-fracking-marcellus-shale>